

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-07 AGRE-00 AID-05 IO-13 USIA-06
COME-00 TRSE-00 EPG-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07
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R 041340Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY ACCRA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7729
INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LOME
AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

C O N F I D E N T I A L ACCRA 3319

LAGOS ALSO FOR AGATT

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ECON, EPAP, PINT, GH
SUBJ: BASIC FOODSTUFFS IN GHANA: LOWER CEILING PRICES,
BUT NONE AVAILABLE

1. PRESS APRIL 30 HEADLINED SUPREME MILITARY COUNCIL
DECISION, WITH IMMEDIATE EFFECT, TO ENFORCE SIGNIFICANTLY
LOWER CEILING PRICES ON SEVERAL BASIC FOODS. THEY IM-
MEDIATELY DISAPPEARED FROM THE OPEN MARKET.

2. AFFECTED FOODS ARE KENKEY (BALLS OF COOKED CORN MEAL,
CALLED GHANAIA DUMPLINGS BY THE IRREVERENT, AND TYPICALLY
AVAILABLE FROM INNUMERABLE ROADSIDE SELLERS), CORN, CORN
MEAL, CASSAVA MEAL, GARRI (GRATED, DRIED, FRIED CASSAVA),
RICE, EGGS, CHICKENS, AND POULTRY FEED. REDUCTIONS
RANGE FROM 30 OR 40 PERCENT TO (IN THE CASE OF KENKEY)
OVER 70 PERCENT.

3. THESE FOODS, OF COURSE, IMMEDIATELY DISAPPEARED FROM
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OPEN SALES. ONLY WAY TO OBTAIN, AT PREVIOUS HIGH PRICES,
WAS TO GO TO HOME OF SELLER AND BE A KNOWN CUSTOMER WHO
WOULD NOT REPORT TO AUTHORITIES.

4. POLICE AND MILITARY WERE HEAVY-HANDED IN SOME AREAS,
INCLUDING IN ACCRA, AND MADE ARRESTS OF THOSE REPORTEDLY
SELLING ABOVE CEILINGS. WE HAVE SOME REPORTS THAT AS A

RESULT OF SOME ARRESTS ACCRA KENKEY SELLERS HAVE GONE ON STRIKE, EVEN REFUSING REGULAR CUSTOMERS AT BLACK MARKET RATES.

5. MAY 4 PRESS REPORTS "SITUATION NOW CHANGES FOR BETTER," AND CLAIMS THESE FOODS GENERALLY AVAILABLE AT NEW PRICES. THIS FALLS IN CATEGORY OF WISHFUL THINKING; IT SIMPLY IS NOT SO.

6. ENTIRE OPERATION HAS AN AIR OF DESPERATION ABOUT IT. UNLESS GOG IS WILLING AND ABLE TO IMPOSE FAR HEAVIER-HANDED CONTROL OVER EVERYDAY LIFE THAN IT HAS BEEN WILLING TO IN PAST -- WHICH WE DOUBT -- BLACK MARKET WILL SIMPLY BURGEON, DISTORTIONS IN ECONOMY WILL WORSEN QUICKLY, AND THE ALREADY WIDESPREAD DISSATISFACTIN WILL REACH CRESCENDO. FOOD RIOTS ARE A POSSIBILITY, THOUGH NOT YET A PROBABILITY. SMITH

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Message Attributes

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